SHRI ANIL BASU (Arambagh) : All the parties have exhausted the time allotted to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All the parties have exhausted the time allotted to them. Now, we are on bonus time. Everybody will be getting a chance to speak. All of us will sit here and whoever wants to speak on the Railway Budget and the Demands for Grants will get a chance.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : It was decided in the Business Advisory Committee, by all the parties, that whatever might be the time, we shall allow all the Members who are willing to speak. That was one decision which was taken in that Committee. When the Deputy-Speaker was in the Chair, he said that one should not take more than ten minutes time. Many of the Members, from your side as well as from our side, have spoken for more than ten minutes. So, let us be tolerant. The dinner is ready; we will have our dinner and come back. Let everybody speak on this.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR : Sir, I will conclude within three minutes time...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, let us not waste the time of the House. Let him conclude. Everybody will get a chance to speak.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR : Sir, the North-Eastern region is a land-locked area with a perennial flood problem and the road condition is also very bad. Everybody in this House knows about it. The North-Eastern region is entirely dependent on the Railways for the supply of foodgrains and other essential commodities like salt, sugar, cement, edible oil, house building materials, fertilisers etc. More than 40 lakh tonnes of goods are carried by the Railways for the benefit of the North-Eastern region people. Sometimes, there are difficulties because every year, the railway line is disrupted by floods, which occur four to six times in a year, and as a result the flow of goods is also disrupted creating a lot of misery to the people of the North-Eastern region. My request to the hon. Minister of Railways is that he should give special priority for allotment of railway wagons for the North-Eastern region so that these essential commodities would reach those difficult areas in time.

I want to make just one more point. In the North-Eastern region, during the British period, a lot of land was acquired. So, a lot of railway land is available, but the illegal encroachment of the railway land is going on in a very rampant way. Sometimes, I feel that the railway officials are also involved in giving away this valuable land to the encroachers. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister of Railways to pay sharp attention so that these encroachments can be stopped.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR : Sir, the hon. Minister of Railways has given an annual outlay of Rs. 8,130 crore, and that is eight per cent more than the last year's outlay. He has talked about many ambitious new programmes and new lines. But without the budgetary support these things will not be implemented. If these things are announced and not completed in time, that will create more discontentment among the people. So, I request the Prime Minister to give necessary advice to the hon. Minister of Finance so that proper budgetary support is given to the Railways.

With these few words, once again, I congratulate the hon. Minister of Railways for acknowledging the difficulty and trying to meet some of the pressing needs of the North-Eastern region. Sir, once again, I also thank you for giving me the permission to express my views.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have to inform the hon. Members that they have to assemble in room No. 70 at 8.15 hrs. for dinner and the pressmen will also go to room No.70. The dinner for the staff has been arranged in room No.73. I request all of you to go there at your convenience.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, Dwarka Nath Das ji will speak. Please wait for a minute, we have to take some legislative business before you speak.

20.09 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (EIGHTIETH AMENDMENT) BILL*

(Amendment of articles 81, 82 and 170)

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

> "That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : Sir, I introduce the Bill.

20.10 hrs.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL*

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill

* Published in the Gazzette of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section 2, dated 25.7.96.

further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and the Representation of the People Act, 1951."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : I introduce the Bill.

20.12 hrs.

1996-97

RAILWAYS BUDGET - GENERAL DISCUSSION

AND

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS ON ACCOUNT (RAILWAYS) - CONTD.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Those who want to go for dinner, they can go. Their names are not called. Again they can come back.

SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS (Karimganj) : Sir, I rise not to support this Railway Budget but, at the same time, not to totally oppose it. This Budget is not a very good one but, at the same time, not a very bad one also. It is in between.

The present Railway Budget 1996-97 is simply a copy of the earlier one. That is, there are no innovations at all. Second class fare has not been increased. There are frequencies of trains and some new trains have been introduced and there are a few extensions. Except this, this Budget is thoroughly urban-oriented and not at all rural-oriented.

In this Budget, Southern Assam and Tripura had thoroughly been neglected although the hon. Railway Minister has assured that rural and backward areas will be connected by rail. But his assurance is totally in vain. *(Interruptions)* In all the branch sections of railways in Southern Assam, running of trains is being withdrawn. In course of time, this branch line will probably be closed. Previously, the trains used to run two to three times in 24 hours but now it is only one time.

So, I feel that there is some secret agreement between the surface transport and the rail transport. Otherwise, it could not happen.

As there is not sufficient time at the disposal of the Chair, I am not going to discuss some aspects of the Railway Budget but simply I want to put forward my demands. The railway line should be extended from Dullabcherra to Ranpur. Of course, this is in my constituency. This proposed Dullabcherra-Ranpur Branch Section is in Karimganj district of Assam. People of that backward area have been demanding for the same since 1977. But till this date, nothing has been done. Further, the Badarpur railway junction in Karimganj district of Assam should be upgraded as a railway division which has been assured by the previous Congress Government as it is the nerve centre of rail service in Southern Assam.

Next, the proposed broad gauge line should be extended from Lumding to Kumarghat in Tripura *via* Badarpur as it is the lifeline connecting Tripura with Assam. Of course, the broad gauge line should be extended to Silchar *via* Badarpur as provided in the Budget. It is a long-pending demand. I hope that the construction of the broad gauge line would be taken up very soon. But the budgetary provision for this broad gauge line is so small that I think within 10-15 years it cannot be completed.

Construction of Lala Bhairangti line in Katakhal-Bhairabi branch section in Hailakandi district of Assam should be taken up soon for which the survey has already been made. But up to this date nothing has been done. Then, why has the survey been made for this line? There is a strong demand for this branch line.

The frequency of trains in branch sections in Karimganj and Hailakandi districts of Assam should be increased for the convenience of the passengers. In this branch line form Katakhal to Bhairabi, the train goes only once in a day and from Karimganj to Dullabcherra also the train goes only once in day. Previously, this train used to go two or three times in 24 hours. But it is available now only once.

20.20 hrs.

(Prof. Rita Verma - *in the Chair*)

Madam, the Cachar Express connecting Silchar with Lumding through the hill section should originate from Karimganj because the Barak Valley Express as well as the Cachar Express originate from Silchar ignoring Karimganj. So, I hope that the hon. Railway Minister would make a provision so that the Cachar Express can orginate from Harimganj junction of my constituency. If the Cachar Express originates from Karimganj junction, I think, the passengers of not only the Karimganj district but also of Kailakandi district will be benefited. The hundred coaches of two prestigious trains, that is, the Barak Valley Express and Cachar Express, connecting Silchar and Lunding and also of trains in the branch section of Southern Assam should be replaced by new once because these coaches are worn out. In these two trains, that is, the Barak Valley Express and the Cachar Express, there should be a provision for AC coaches. The railway tracks in all the branch section in Southern